

## **We can all Help prevent plague**

- Avoid contact with wild rodents and their fleas, nests and burrows.
- Eliminate rodent shelter around the home:  
Clean-up woodpiles, uncovered garbage, scattered pet food, and rock piles.
- Keep pets as confined as possible and dust pets weekly with approved flea powder.
- Contact the CITY/COUNTY VECTOR CONTROL OFFICE if you find dead or sick rodents around your home.

**452-5300**



squirrel



prairie dogs

**Stay away from these animals  
in their habitats.**



rat



rabbit

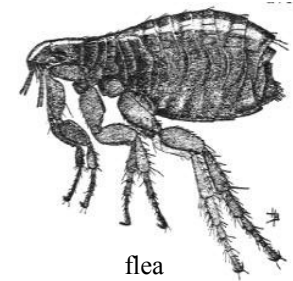
Bernalillo County  
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Office of  
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Health

# **PLAGUE**

**What to know  
&  
How to protect yourself**



flea



bacterium *Yersinia pestis*

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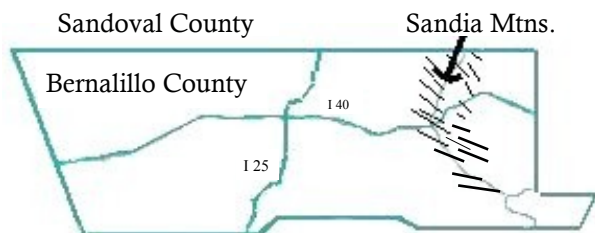
## What is the Plague ?

Plague is a naturally-occurring, **flea-transmitted disease** of rodents and rabbits caused by the bacterium *Yersinia pestis*. Infected rodents usually die, leaving plague-infected fleas which then find new rodent or human hosts.

## Where has it been found in Bernalillo County ?

Plague-infected animals and human cases have occurred mainly in mountainous eastern Bernalillo County and in the western foothills of the Sandias. No infected animals have been found in the valley.

A majority of the human cases have been contracted around the home rather than on a picnic or hike.



## How can you get the plague ?

Humans can get the plague in 3 ways:

- By the bite of a plague infested flea
- By handling plague infested tissues of sick or dead animals
- By inhaling infected droplets from a pneumonic patient

## When is plague season ?

Human cases have occurred throughout the year, but the majority of cases occur during the warm months of

**May through September** when rodents, fleas, and people are most active outdoors.

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR
<b>MAY</b>	<b>JUNE</b>	<b>JULY</b>	<b>AUG</b>
<b>SEPT</b>	OCT	NOV	DEC

## Animals of concern:

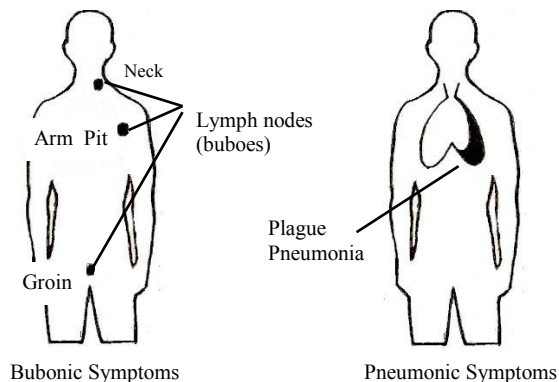
- Wild rodents such as mice, rats, squirrels, chipmunks, prairie dogs, gophers, etc.
- Wild rabbits



### ALSO:

**Pets that hunt** may bring plague infested fleas into the home and can also become infected with plague. Cats are more likely than dogs to get sick, and can spread the disease to their owners through biting, coughing, or draining abscesses. Take your pet to the vet immediately if it has had contact with rodents and develops symptoms of fever, lethargy and appetite loss.

## Human types of plague and symptoms to look for:



There are 3 forms of human plague:

1. BUBONIC
2. SEPTICEMIC
3. PNEUMONIC

1. BUBONIC plague is the classic form which results from flea bite or direct contact with infected animal tissue.

*Symptoms* will be **very pronounced** and will develop within 2-6 days:

- feeling very sick all over
- headache
- chills
- high fever spike
- pain and swelling in the lymph nodes (buboes) of the groin, armpit, or neck area.

2. SEPTICEMIC plague has the same incubation period and symptoms as BUBONIC plague without the lymph nodes swelling.

3. PNEUMONIC plague may result from BUBONIC or SEPTICEMIC plague if not properly treated.